# *Dawning of* THOUGHTS

FAITH NOTES 2026 DIGITAL

FAITH NOTES

# dawning of Thoughts

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*I dedicate this work to my mother, whose love, sacrifices, and unwavering support have been my greatest source of strength and inspiration. Your guidance and encouragement have shaped who I am today, and for that, I am forever grateful.*

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# Preface

This collection presents a series of reflections based on the Digital Examen, a practice used to reflect on weekly assessments and Gospel readings. The Digital Examen serves as a guide for deeper understanding, allowing moments of learning and faith to be examined with honesty and purpose.

This work covers reflections gathered throughout the second semester. Each entry is rooted in the weekly Gospel messages and assessments, offering insights into how these teachings connect to daily life, personal decisions, and real-world situations.

Within these pages, readers will find reflections that highlight the importance of faith in action, moral responsibility, and personal growth. More than just responses to weekly tasks, these writings aim to show how the Word can be lived out in meaningful ways. This collection invites readers to reflect on their own experiences and to build a life grounded in truth, compassion, and integrity.

# Acknowledgments

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# 1

# Lead and love

## Love, don't exploit

The gospel From November 11, reminds us of what true christian service looks like, quiet, humble, and even without expecting any reward. Like St. Martin served with pure heart, offering his life to god and to the poor. This challenges us today, especially that we are witnessing the corruption and the injustice of our government here in the Philippines. Recently GMA News stories feed the television about the irregularities in flood control projects. This shows how the poor always suffer when most of the leaders fail in their duty. The gospel reminds us and calls us a different kind of leadership, leadership that is rooted in love,honesty and service. Just like St. Martin of Tours does.

## Entrusted, not Entitled

With the parable of the talents, this teaches us about the responsibilities and accountabilities that are the right thing to do. God entrusts us with different gifts, not only personal talents but also positions, resources, and influences. These are meant to be used for good not just for yourself but for others especially for the marginalized people. When leaders misuse public funds or allow corruption to grow, they bury the talents entrusted to them. The ongoing investigations and calls for accountability reminds us that the society expects to manage and pick up the roots of all the things in the society. We too are called to use our gifts no matter how small it is. We need to promote justice, speak the truth, and support the better and right person that is indeed to that position.

## Do Not Grow Weary

Another gospel urges us to persevere in doing good, even when the world around us is imperfect and unjust. It can be discouraging to see how the corruption is still going on and keeping our taxes to their pocket. And to watch innocent people suffer especially on the days of “Bagyong Uwan”

we will see how devastating and how the people behind them urge to break and bend the law and the trust of every Filipino people. But Jesus teaches us not to go weary or afraid. Instead, we must remain hardened in faith and to our mission. In our society today we are marked by dishonesty and inequality, we are called to be the signs of hope, to serve people joyfully, to use our gifts responsibly, we must strive for justice.

## Servants for Justice

By living these different gospels we might bring God to enlighten a world longing for justice and compassion. May we continue to strive for a leadership that is not driven by personal gain, but driven by the personal commitment and welfare of the people. Let us be inspired by

St. Martin’s example of selfless service

and be reminded that the true measure of a leader is found in their love for others and the ability to act justly. We are called to be stewards of the gifts of God that are given to us. And it’s through our actions that we help to transform our society into one and to love each one of us.

# 2

# Authority Over the Chaos of Our Streets

## Silence, and come out

Imagine stepping into that Capernaum synagogue on a Sabbath morning. The air thick with scrolls and murmurs, Jesus teaches with a quiet power that silences the room. Suddenly, a man convulses, an unclean spirit speaking through him: *"What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."*

But Jesus doesn't flinch. "*Be silent, and come out of him!"* But the demon obeys, convulsing the man one last time before fleeing leaving awe: *"A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."* Jesus shows another way. His authority isn't a weapon or a jeepney bumper, it's the Word who made flesh, cutting through chaos without adding to it. The spirit recognizes Him: *"the Holy One of God."*

It knows true power doesn't negotiate or retaliate; it commands because it's rooted in love and truth. Many Romy's vengeance? It destroys him too—prison bars now his synagogue, rage his convulsion. Sin wounds not just the neighbor but the sinner, fracturing bonds with God and others. Like the possessed, we're all haunted by these spirits: corruption that blinds justice, poverty that fuels despair, anger that possesses the heart. Greed that continues to fill up our minds.

## Healing the Wreckage

Catholic teachings call this metanoia a total turning back to God, sorrow for sin with resolve

to amend life. Penance isn't just words but it's a special word it's contrition of heart, confession, and satisfaction. Making amends for the harm done. For Mang Romy, true freedom comes not from fire, but the sacrament where absolution lifts sin's weight, though we still repair the wreckage: return stolen peace, heal slandered lives. Jesus' exorcism foreshadows Confession before merciful judgment, choosing life over death. The Church, holy yet always purifying, embraces sinners like us, urging gestures of reconciliation, care for the poor, taking up the cross daily.

## My Stand I Guess??

What about me? In seminary, scrolling news of EDSA traffic hell, PNP scandals and different government corruption, I feel that pull—the temptation to cheer vigilantes, to think

*"they deserve it."*

But Jesus rebukes: Be silent, come out! His authority invites me to pray boldly, per God's will, shunning idols like self-justice. For Pasay's drivers, it means reporting kotong to real authorities, forming co-ops for fair fares, lifting each other in faith. God defends the oppressed, executing justice through praise and humility. No more cycles of blood; instead, the Kingdom where unclean spirits flee at Christ's name.

# 3

# Seeing God in Unexpected Ways

## They did not recognize him.

What if the signs you've been waiting for were already here, but your eyes were blind to them? Jesus and his disciples are going down on the mountain but the scribes already say that Elijah must come first, but Jesus replies to them that people don't seem to recognize him.

I realize that we too are often waiting for different signs, signs of love, signs of blessing, signs of no manualia, answers to our prayers or relief from our struggles. But we miss them when they appear because they don't match our expectations, our wants. We expect God to give us what we want in a way that is immediate, clear, and can fit into our plans. But God doesn't always work the way we expect. His plans are often different, and they do not always align with the timing or what we hope for. A little story about when I wanted to enter the different big universities here in Manila. Jesus gives me a hard time to process different things, just like I review different entrance exams from different big schools yet he doesn't want me there. He gives me different choices he give me different opportunities

## "They did not recognize him."

This is a reminder that God's blessings may be right in front of us, but we might not see them because we're waiting for something else—something grand or obvious. Perhaps God is already giving us His gifts, but we do not always notice them because we are still asking for too much—because we expect things to happen in a certain way. And so, we overlook the

quiet moments, the small blessings, and the subtle answers that God is giving us, simply because they don't match our wants. Just like in our different houses we may experience being invincible or being ignored by others or even our families, even though we do our best to achieve their wants.

## God's love doesn't always come with fireworks or grand gestures.

Sometimes it's a whisper, a gentle touch, a change in direction . But we need to stay open to seeing it, to recognizing the gifts and opportunities that come in unexpected forms. Just like John the Baptist, who was the answer to the people's prayers, but was ignored because he didn't meet their expectations—God's plans for us may not always look the way we imagine, but they are always meant for our good. We just need the faith and patience to see them.

I remember a time when I felt lost and unsure about the future, when everything seemed unclear, and I didn't know where I was going. I kept asking God for guidance, for a clear sign that I was on the right path. But it wasn't until I let go of my own plans and trusted in His plans In my own life, I have learned that God's plans don't always match our expectations, but they are always better than anything we could have imagined on our own.

# 4

# The Sin of Not Noticing

## Indifference

Have you ever been so focused on your own problems that you completely missed someone else's? Missed in a way that u didn't notice not missing the love of your life. Like when you are stressed about the exams, deadlines, requirements…yet someone next to you is silently carrying something heavier, depression, loneliness, or hunger and we don't even notice it.In today's Gospel, the rich man's biggest sin wasn't cruelty. Because he didn't beat Lazarus. He didn't shout at him. He didn't call for security.

*He just... ignored him.*

And honestly, that scares me.Because it means you don't have to be evil to be lost. You just have to be indifferent. We get too busy—classes, deadlines, relationships, social media, future plans. We're trying to survive the semester. And sometimes we become so focused on our own stress that we don't see the people quietly struggling around us.

*The friend who keeps joking but is actually overwhelmed.*

*The classmate who always sits alone.*

*The family member who needs a call.*

*The person we judge without knowing their story.*

## When Everything Reverses

We can see how death reverses the real status of people because the rich man is suffering. Why? The rich man had everything—comfort, food, good clothes (basically, if he lived today, he'd have fast Wi-Fi, food delivery apps, and premium subscriptions). But he failed in the

most basic exam of values—being a compassionate human being. Lazarus comforted. Again, why? Because Lazarus—whose name means "God helps"—had nothing. And yet, in the end, he had everything. It's not just about heaven and hell. It's about perspective. What feels important now—grades, money, status, title, different physical things that won't last forever. You know what lasts? Not a relationship, not even your subscription but on how we treat people. That's last. In the last line Abraham said that "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." In other words we already know what's right.

*We know when we should help.*

*We know when we should speak up.*

*We know when we should be kinder.*

## It Still Matters

Sometimes we think eternity is far away—like a concept for exams. But Jesus makes it very real. Our small daily choices always matter the most. The way we treat people matters. The way we respond to the person who annoys us, the poor person we avoid eye contact with, the brother we secretly judge—it all matters. The Gospel isn't telling us to fear wealth. It's warning us about comfortable hearts. Hearts that are so full of themselves, there's no space left for others. Or maybe this Gospel isn't asking us to do something huge. Maybe it's just asking us to notice. Notice the "Lazarus" in our life. Because sometimes the biggest sin isn't doing something terrible. It's doing nothing at all. And the good news? We're still here. We still have time to choose differently—to be more aware, more generous, more human.

The danger is that we are too busy.

*Too distracted.*

*Too comfortable.*

*Too focused on our own world*.

We still have time to notice.

Time to care.

Time to cross the distance before it becomes an uncrossable gate.

Maybe it starts with simply not walking past the gate. But open and close it whole heartedly.

# 5

# Faith Over Familiarity

## Faith Beyond Familiarity

Ever wonder why the people who should *know you best are the ones who doubt you most*? This Gospel shows us Jesus returning to his hometown, a place that should have felt *safe* and *welcoming*. Instead, he is met with **doubt** and **questions**. The people listen to him teach, they are amazed by his wisdom, yet they quickly focus on what they think they know about him. To them, he is still just the carpenter, Mary's son, someone ordinary and familiar. Because of this, they **struggle to believe** that God could be working powerfully through him.

This experience is very relatable in Filipino culture. In our families and barangays, people often know our entire story—where we come from, who raised us, and the kind of person we used to be. While this closeness can be a *blessing*, it can also become a *limitation*. When someone begins to grow, change, or respond to a greater calling, others may find it ***difficult*** to accept. Instead of encouragement, the response can sometimes be **doubt** or **comparison**.

## Faithfulness Amid Doubt

Before I entered the seminary, many people *doubted* my decision. Some questioned whether I was truly *serious* about my vocation or whether I would really *persevere* in the path I had chosen. There were even those who *discouraged* me or tried to pull me down. I also heard rumors being spread about me—that I only continued pursuing this path because I was *heartbroken* after a breakup with my former girlfriend, even though we had already been

separated for quite some time. Others would say negative things about life in the seminary itself. What was most painful, however, was realizing that sometimes the *doubt* came from within my own **family**.

There was a time when I overheard them talking about me, saying that they were simply letting me continue because they believed that eventually I would leave the seminary anyway. Yet instead of weakening my doubt, those words became a source of motivation for me. They **strengthened** my **determination** to **persevere**, to finish what I had started, and to continue faithfully pursuing the vocation I believe God has called me to. Indeed, *familiarity can sometimes prevent people from recognizing the good that God is doing in someone's life.*

## Faith Over Fear

The Gospel also points to the importance of *faith*. Jesus does not *force miracles* on his people. Because they **lacked faith**, only a few were **healed**. This reminds us that God's grace is always present. When we *close our hearts*, we also *limit* what God can do in our *lives*.. In our own lives, we may practice our faith regularly—attending Mass, adoration, celebrating fiestas, solemnities —but still *struggle* to **trust God fully**, especially in difficult situations. As I often said before I entered the seminary*: "**Faith over fear**."* Why?? Because I already gave my faith to him so I cannot fear God's plan to me for my future.This passage invites us to reflect on our own attitude. Are we open to God working in ordinary ways? *Do we recognize God's presence in familiar people and places?* Or have we become so used to our faith that we stop expecting God to act?

# 6

# This Is What I Have, Lord

## From Impossibility to Compassion

Imagine being asked to feed five thousand people—with only five loaves of bread and two fish. No money. No grocery store. No backup plan.Most of us would immediately say, "it's impossible! Or is that impossible?" And yet, this is exactly where today's Gospel begins not just with abundance, but with blackness. When Jesus sees the crowd, He does not first see a problem He sees the people. The Gospel tells us that His heart was moved with pity, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Before He multiplies bread, He offers presence. Before He satisfies hunger, He teaches them. This reminds us that real giving always begins with compassion.

The disciples, however, see the situation differently. It is late. The place is deserted. The crowd is too large. Their solution sounds practical and reasonable: "Dismiss them." or send them away so they can take care of themselves.

*How often do we do the same?*

When faced with needs that feel too big, loneliness, pain,or even the struggles of people close to us we quietly say in our hearts, "*I can't do anything about that*." But Jesus responds with words that completely change the direction of the story:

***"Give them some food yourselves."***

This is not just a command, it is a challenge. Jesus does not deny the problem. He simply

invites the disciples to be part of the answer. He does not ask them to solve everything. He asks them to give what they have. They hesitate. They calculate. Yet Two hundred days wages would not be enough. And they are right practically speaking. But Jesus does not ask for what they do not have. He asks, "How many loaves do you have?"

*Painting of Jesus with the feeding of the five thousand*

*Five loaves. Two fish.*

Small. Ordinary. Almost embarrassing. Why? Because five loaves and two fish don't seem like anything when you're trying to feed five thousand people, right?

Yet this is the lesson from the Gospel God does not work with what we imagine we need. He works with what we are willing to give. Someone had to let go of those loaves and fish. Someone had to trust that offering them was better than holding on to them. That simple act

of giving—quiet, unnoticed—became the seed of a miracle. It's the mustard seed that Jesus planted. This speaks deeply to our own lives.

*In God's Hands, Nothing Is Wasted*

Giving is not always about money or material things. Often, what God asks of us feels just as small as our time, our attention, our patience, our willingness to listen, advice, and serve other people. Sometimes it is offering help when we are tired, forgiving when it is difficult, or showing kindness when it is not returned. There are moments when giving feels risky. We fear that if we give too much, we will be left with nothing. But this Gospel assures us that generosity does not lead to emptiness—it leads to abundance. Notice something important? Jesus does not give the food directly to the crowd. He gives it to the disciples, and the disciples give it to the people. In other words, God chooses to work through human hands. God brings other people as his instrument to help those who indeed.

## More Than Enough in God's Hands

This means that every act of generosity no matter how small it is, it becomes a way God feeds others or to help others. When we give, we are not just helping someone, we are participating in God's own compassion, in God's own generosity.

And the result?

Everyone eats.
Everyone is satisfied.
And twelve baskets are left over.
God's generosity always exceeds our expectations.

This challenges the mindset of ours that we often live with—the belief that there is never enough time, never enough energy, never enough love. The Gospel tells us otherwise. When what little we have is placed in God's hands, it becomes more than enough.

Today, Jesus still asks the same question:What do you have? Not what you wish you had. Not what others have. But what do you have or what are you willing to offer? And He asks us not

to keep it, but to give it. The feeding of the five thousand teaches us that miracles begin when we stop saying, “This is not enough,” but rather we say “this is what i have lord” Again Jesus *said “Give them some food yourselves.”* This is not just His command to the disciples. It is His invitation to us to give to others.

# 7

# Actions That Stand the Storm

The news about the **nine police officers in Navotas** being removed from duty after being accused of torturing a suspect is deeply upsetting. Even while investigations are ongoing, the situation raises serious questions about **how authority should be exercised** and how essential it is to **respect the dignity of every person.** Reflecting on this incident alongside **today's Gospel (December 4)**, I am reminded of what can happen when **power is used carelessly and unfairly**.

## Living Faith

In the Gospel, Jesus says that **not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of God**, but only those who **do the will of the Father**. He compares those who live out God's word to a **wise man who builds his house on rock**. When storms come, the house stands firm. But those who hear God's word and fail to live by it are like a **foolish man who builds his house on sand** — when the storm comes, everything collapses.

The lesson is simple but powerful: **words alone are not enough — what truly matters is how we act**.

The incident in Navotas reflects this truth clearly. Police officers are entrusted with **authority and responsibility**. They are called to **protect the people**, including those accused of crimes. When authority is misused, it is like **building a house on sand**. It may appear strong at first, but it will eventually collapse. **Actions rooted in injustice and cruelty cannot last**. True strength comes from **justice, fairness, and respect for human dignity** — the very rock on which Jesus calls us to build our lives.

This Gospel is not only for those in power — **it is for all of us**. It asks us to examine our own actions:

**Are we doing what is right?**

**Are we ignoring wrongdoing?**

**Are we helping those in need?**

## Storm-Tested Faith

Life is full of storms — challenges, temptations, difficult choices. These storms reveal whether our foundation is strong or weak. If we live with **integrity and respect**, we can stand firm. But if we ignore God's teachings and treat others unfairly, we are **building on sand**, and our actions will eventually fail.

Another clear lesson is this: **actions speak louder than words,** just like what Jesus did in his missions. He never speaks about negative things or he never argues to the Pharisees, but Jesus did just what is needed to do or to heal those who are sick. It is easy to say the right thing, to promise justice, or even to say "I love you." But Jesus reminds us that what truly counts is **doing what is right, even when it is difficult**. Protecting the vulnerable, standing against injustice, and treating others with dignity are ways of **building on rock**.

Press enter or click to view image in full size

***Picture of Jesus Healing the sick From the gospel of Luke 6:6–11***

Finally, the Gospel reminds us that we are **responsible for our choices**. For those in authority, this means using power wisely and justly. For ordinary citizens, it means **speaking up when it matters**, especially for the common good — just as **Kap. Oscar Bucol** did.In the end, the storms will come. The question is not *if* they will come, but **what we have built our lives upon**.